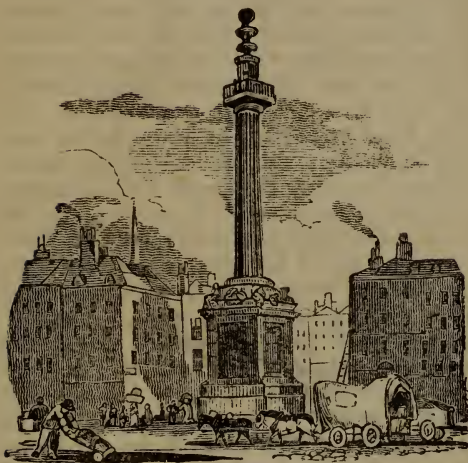


THE
REAL VALUE.



LONDON:
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
56, *Paternoster-row* ;
SOLD ALSO BY J. NISBET, BERNERS-STREET.

THE REAL VALUE,



As I stood the other day in a mercer's shop, I saw some young ladies busily engaged in choosing some gay articles of dress; and the shopman as busy in handing them down a variety to look at, and placing them in the most tempting point of view. A lace veil seemed very strongly to attract the desire of one of the young

ladies; and having for some moment silently admired it, she whispered to her companions, and then inquired the price. The shopman said it was only two guineas. At this she appeared startled; but he continued his speech, "Yes, it is uncommonly cheap; we are selling these things far below their real value!" A drawer of ribbons stood by, from which the ladies had been choosing; and a young girl, while waiting for some things she had been sent for, took up a shining pink satin, and asked the price, at the same time slowly untwisting the corner of her pocket-handkerchief, and bringing forth a hoarded shilling. The price was eight-pence a yard. "Eight-pence!" said the girl, with a sigh; "is that the lowest, sir?" "Yes," returned the shopman, "the very lowest; a shilling is the real value." "I suppose, sir, a yard and a half is not enough to put on a bonnet? I wanted to have had two yards." The shopman unrolled it, and held it in the form of a bow. "Yes," said he, "you cannot have less than two yards." The poor girl looked at the ribbon, and looked at the shilling, and seemed to say, "I wish I could stretch you to sixteen-pence." "Well," shall I cut you off two yards?" asked the shopman. "No, sir, I believe

not." "Then will you take a yard and a half?" Seeing she hesitated, I contrived to draw her attention to some good strong worsted stockings, of which I had just been purchasing a pair for a girl about her own age; and which I could not help observing in my own mind she appeared to be very much in want of, for those she had on were completely out at the heels, which I had been thinking would very ill assort with the fine pink ribbon. She looked at a pair, which the man told her were a shilling, adding, "They are really worth a great deal more money."

But now my change was brought, and I left the shop without knowing whether the young ladies purchased the two-guinea veil, or the little maid the pink ribbon, or the stout worsted stockings. However, as I walked home, my mind ran upon the shopman's repeated expression, "the real value."

Two guineas for a lace veil! thought I; suppose that young lady should give it, it is all very well if she can afford it, and if it is becoming her station in life; but from what I saw and what I know of her, I am very much of opinion that if two guineas go for that veil, they can be very ill spared, and I can easily fancy her placed in situ-

ations wherein she would feel that two guineas was far more than its real value. Suppose she should be out in a heavy shower of rain, a mile or two from any shelter, what would her two-guinea veil do towards screening her person or her garments? or if some stranger should meet her, and offer an umbrella in exchange for her veil, how glad would she be to accept the bargain; and yet several very good umbrellas might have been bought for the same money. So also, if she should be out on a keen frosty day, would not her poor perishing shoulders reprove her while they smarted with cold that a good warm shawl would have prevented, which might have been purchased for less money than the veil. Or should her dress chance to catch fire, what would the veil do? only increase the blaze; a woollen cloak or blanket might perhaps have extinguished it, and would at that moment have been considered of far more real value. What if she should be in a situation where food was not to be obtained, and she really was (as Esau foolishly expressed himself) "at the point to die," what good would her finery do her? Even if she should meet some plain cottager, and, asking to share his crust, should offer this expensive article as

payment for the refreshment she needed ; if he were not disposed to relieve her wants from mere charity, such an offer would have very little influence with him. He would say, “ No, keep your useless finery, we cannot wear it, it is of no value to us ; the spiders hang finer cobwebs than that on my rose-bushes every morning, yet we have never taken the trouble to bring one in.”

It is stated, that in a famine which prevailed on board a ship at sea, one of the passengers being nearly exhausted, said to another, “ My friend, I have four thousand pounds, which I would gladly give for a loaf of bread, and a glass of wine.”

Now it is not meant to say that any one thing can be useful at all times, and under all circumstances, or that everything that is not so is to be despised ; but in general we may say that is of the greatest real value which is the most really useful. And no prudent person would spend so much of his property upon things that are merely ornamental, as to leave himself destitute, or even straitened, in those that are really useful and necessary. If young people would accustom themselves, before they indulge in expense merely to please their fancy, just to consider—Of what real use

will this be to me? Would not the same money purchase me something that I am in more real need of, and that will be to me more really valuable?

Have you ever, my young friends, considered the real value of a Bible? If you have, I am sure you could not bear to spend one penny upon finery or amusement, and remain destitute of such a treasure; especially now that it may be obtained upon such easy terms. David esteemed the very small part of the Bible which he possessed as "better than thousands of gold and silver," Ps. cxix. 72. We have read, in history, of one of our own countrymen, who gave a load of hay for only a leaf of one of the Epistles. It is not long ago since a poor sailor boy, escaped death on a piece of the ship which was wrecked; as he approached the shore half naked, the spectators observed a small parcel firmly tied round his waist with a handkerchief. Some thought it must be his money, others thought his watch, or the ship's papers, but it proved to be his Bible; a Bible which his aged father had given him at leaving home, with his earnest prayer that it might become the means of his salvation. These persons did not prize the Bible too highly; no, it is indeed a treasure beyond all price, for it is

able to afford us consolation under the most distressed and destitute circumstances, and to make us wise unto salvation, by faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Have you ever considered the real value of religion? The Bible tells us that it is the principal thing, "More precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared with it," Prov. iii. 14, 15. iv. 7.

'Tis religion that can give
Real pleasure while we live;
'Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die.

Have you ever considered the real value of your souls? Some people make light of their souls, debase and defile them by sin, and trample them, as swine would trample a jewel in the dirt and mire; they think any trifle of more value, any pursuit of more consequence. But what does Jesus Christ say? He made the world, and he made the soul, and he well knows the value of both; and he tells us that it would be a bad bargain if we should gain the whole world at the loss of our souls, Mark viii. 37. If you would know the real value of the soul, think what an infinite price the Son of God counted not too much to pay for its redemption; and may you never for a

moment hesitate about any thing that stands in competition with its salvation. Remember, no expense can be extravagant, no sacrifice costly or wasteful, which the salvation of your soul demands; but act like the wise merchantman, of whom our Lord tells us, Matt. xiii. 45, 46, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. For whosoever he be that doth not think Christ and salvation worth obtaining at the loss of all that he hath, he cannot be Christ's disciple.

——“ There is something that will live,
When light no more the sun shall give;
When moons no more shall set or rise,
And stars shall quit the silent skies;
And, vanish'd in eternity,
Time and this earth shall cease to be.

“ It is the soul, the better part,
That which is thinking in my heart;
'Tis that which never can decay,
Though all things else should pass away;
My body in the dust shall lie,
My soul can never, never die.”





THE praises of my tongue
I offer to the Lord,
That I was taught and learnt so
young,
To read his Holy Word.

Here I can read and learn,
How Christ the Son of God,
Did undertake our great concern;
Our ransom cost his blood.